

News Release
U.S. Department of Justice
United States Attorney
District of Rhode Island



November 16, 2006

Dog club, president charged with killing migratory birds

The United States Attorney has charged the **Little Rhody Beagle Club, Inc.** and its president, **William Forward**, with killing migratory birds in violation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and with illegally using a pesticide to kill migratory birds.

United States Attorney Robert Clark Corrente, Thomas J. Healy, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Michael Hubbard, Special Agent in Charge of the Environmental Protection Agency, Criminal Investigation Division, and Steven Hall, Chief of the Rhode Island Environmental Police, jointly announced a six-count information, which the government filed yesterday in U.S. District Court Providence.

Also filed were agreements by both Forward and the club to plead guilty to the misdemeanor charges. The plea agreement with the club, which is on Cowesett Road in Warwick, anticipates that it will pay a total fine of \$20,000, the maximum prescribed by the statutes in question. It also anticipates certain restrictions on the club's members and officers.

According to the information, the Little Rhody Beagle Club trains and runs field trials for beagles. The club stocks its grounds with rabbits that it uses to train the dogs.

The information alleges that Forward and the club used firearms, steel leghold traps and carbofuran, an insecticide, to kill migratory birds that preyed on the club's rabbits. It alleges that the club and Forward illegally killed red-tailed hawks, Cooper's hawks, great horned owls,

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northern flickers, northern mockingbirds, turkey vultures, and mourning doves.

Federal environmental regulations limit the use of carbofuran, which is sold commercially as Furadan, to protecting crops against certain insects. The information alleges that Forward and the Little Rhody Beagle Club put carbofuran in eggs and animal carcasses that it used as bait to poison migratory birds and preserve the club's rabbits for the beagles. Federal agents allegedly found traces of carbofuran in carcasses of a turkey vulture and a red-tailed hawk. They also allegedly found the chemical in eggs, chicken bones, and dead squirrels used as bait.

The information charges Forward and the club with six misdemeanor charges: one count of violating the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and five counts of illegally using a federally regulated insecticide. The maximum penalty for violating the Migratory Bird Treaty Act is a \$15,000 fine and six-months imprisonment, or, for a corporation, five years probation. The maximum penalty for illegally using a pesticide is 30 days imprisonment and a \$1,000 fine for each count. An information is merely an allegation and, the filing of a plea agreement notwithstanding, a defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

A summons will be issued for Forward and attorneys for the club to appear for arraignment in U.S. District Court.

A joint investigation included the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Rhode Island Environmental Police, and the Environmental Protection Agency, Criminal Investigation Division. Assistant U.S. Attorney Terrence P. Donnelly is prosecuting the case.

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